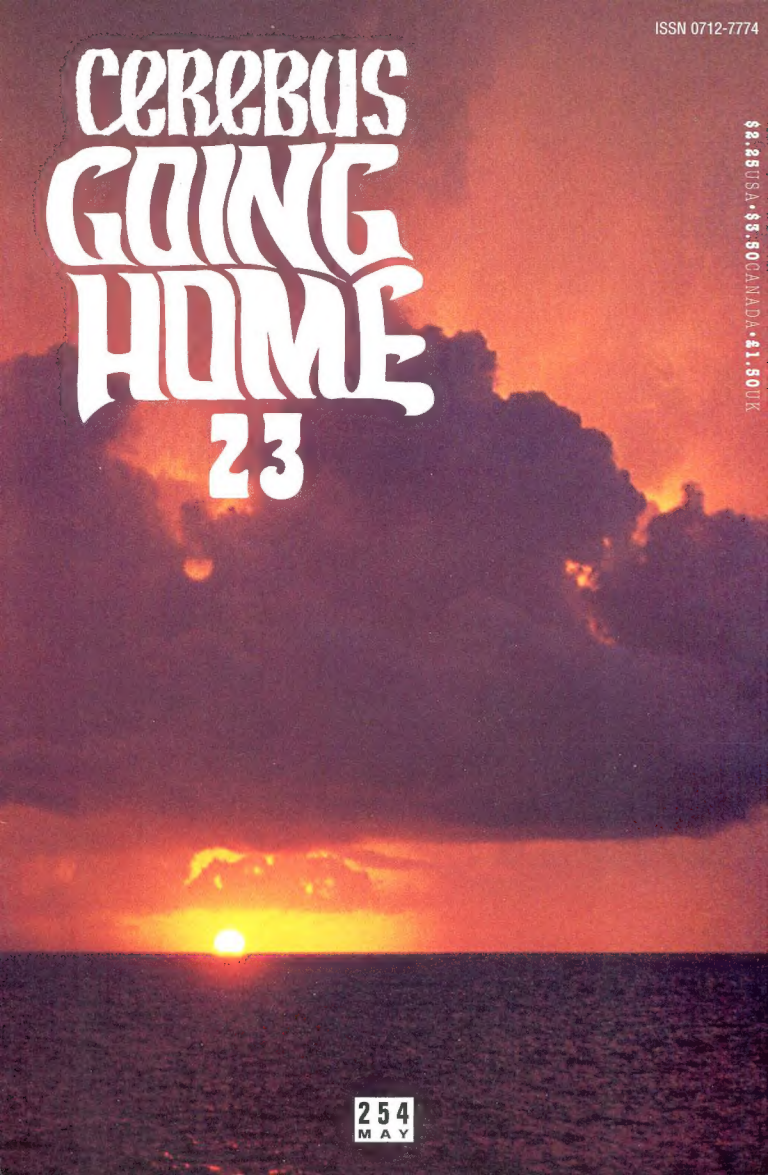
ISSN 0712-7774

CEREBUS

GOING HOME

23

$2.25USA•$3.50CANADA•£1.50UK



254
MAY

ISSN 0712-7774

CEREBUS

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Adriana Ivancich.

CEREBUS

NO. 254 MAY 2000

DAVE SIM
Creator, Writer, Characters/ pencil & ink, mechanical tones, lettering

GERHARD
Background Artist/pencil & ink
Cover photo

CAROL WEST
Administrative Assistant

DIANA SCHUTZ
Proofreading

GOING HOME

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BOOK ONE
Sudden Moves
(Cerebus 232 to 239)

•

BOOK TWO
Fall and the River
(Cerebus 240 to 250)

•

BOOK THREE
Form & Void
(Cerebus 251 to 265)

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DAVE SIM AND GERHARD

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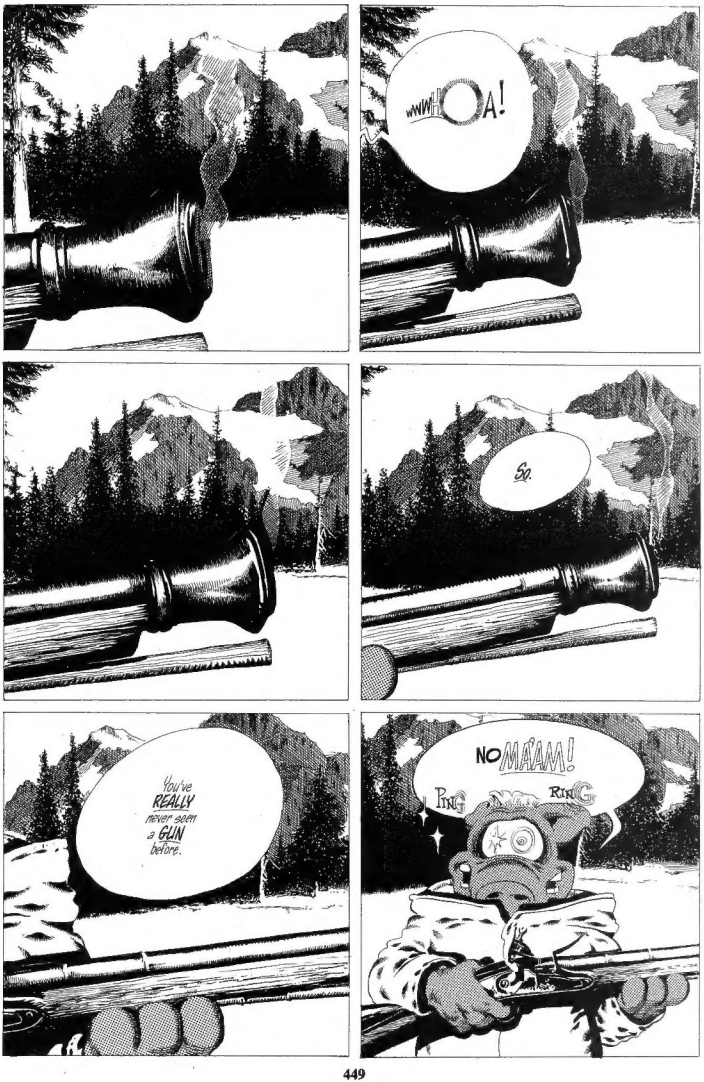
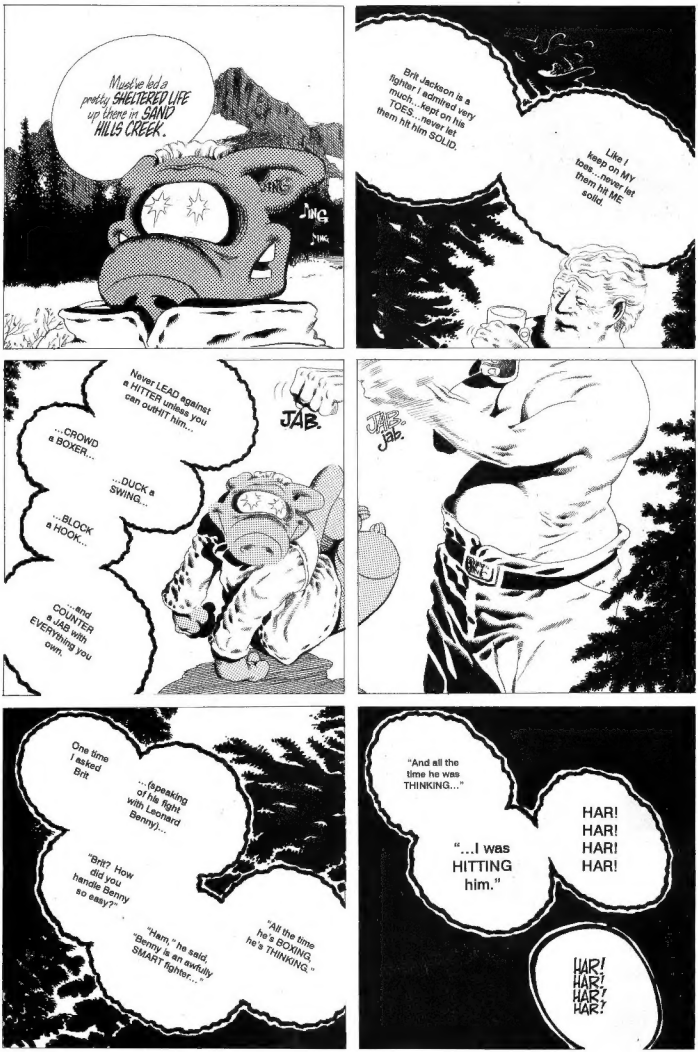
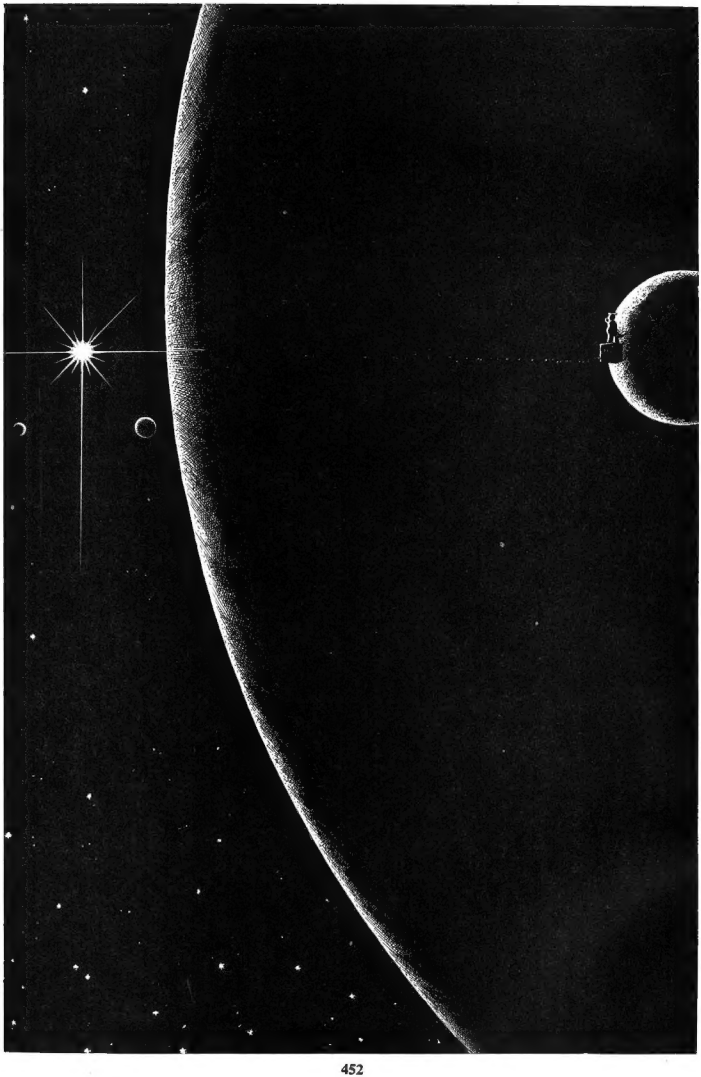
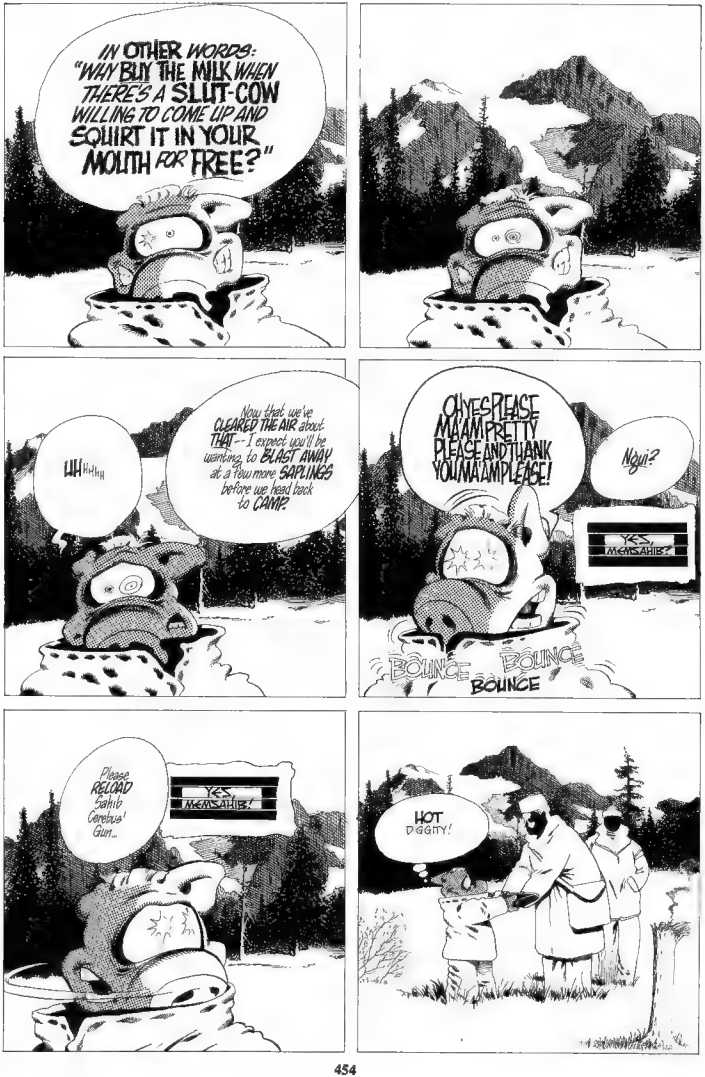

WWWHOA!
So
You've REALLY never seen a GUN before.
NO MAAM!
RING
RING


Mus'dve led a pretty SHELTERED LIFE up there on SAND HILLS CREEK.
Brit Jackson is a fighter I admired very much...kept on his TOES...never let them hit him SOLID.
Like I keep on MY toes...never let them hit ME solid.
Never LEAD against a HITTER unless you can outHIT him...
...CROWD a BOXER...
...DUCK a SWING...
...BLOCK a HOOK...
...and COUNTER a JAB with EVERYthing you own.
JAB.
JAB! Jab.
One time I asked Brit
..(speaking of his fight with Leonard Benny)...
"Brit? How did you handle Benny so easy?"
"Hmm," he said, "Benny is an awfully SMART fighter..."
"All the time he's BOXING, he's THINKING."
"And all the time he was THINKING..."
"...I was HITTING him."
HAR! HAR! HAR! HAR!
HAR! HAR! HAR! HAR!

Why, MISS MARY will be HAPPY to show you how.
Here.
You can even use ...
My. Gun.
PARDON... ?
... "YOU MU... 'VE LED A ...LTERED LIFE ...P THERE IN SAND ...LLS.
OH. AYE...
AYE.
ACTUALLY? MA'AM?
CEREBUS HASN'T BEEN IN SAND HILLS CREEK FOR A LONG TIME
CEREBUS SPENT THE LAST FEW YEARS RUNNING A TAVERN ...
...WAAAAY OUT BY THE WALL OF TSI!
AND BEFORE THAT CEREBUS WAS



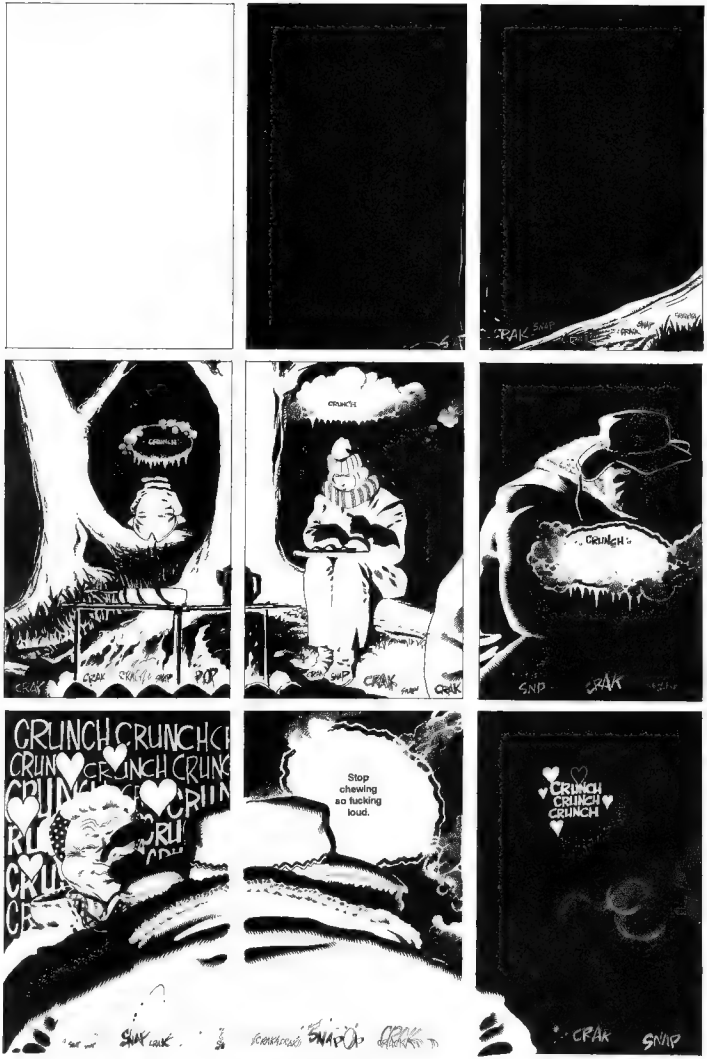
...TRAVELLING...
... A LOT...
NONE SO BLIND AS HE WHO WILL NOT SEE.
KNOW YOUR OWN MIND.
FOLLOW YOUR HEART.
LIE DOWN WITH DOGS AND GET UP WITH FLEAS.
TRAVELLING, you say
UHHHHH
OH heh-heh YES MA'AM! SO THERE'S PROBABLY A HUNDRED THINGS THAT ARE "OLD HAT" TO YOU... AND HA-A-M AND JAKA... AND HEH-HEH
BRAND NEW TO CEREBUS!

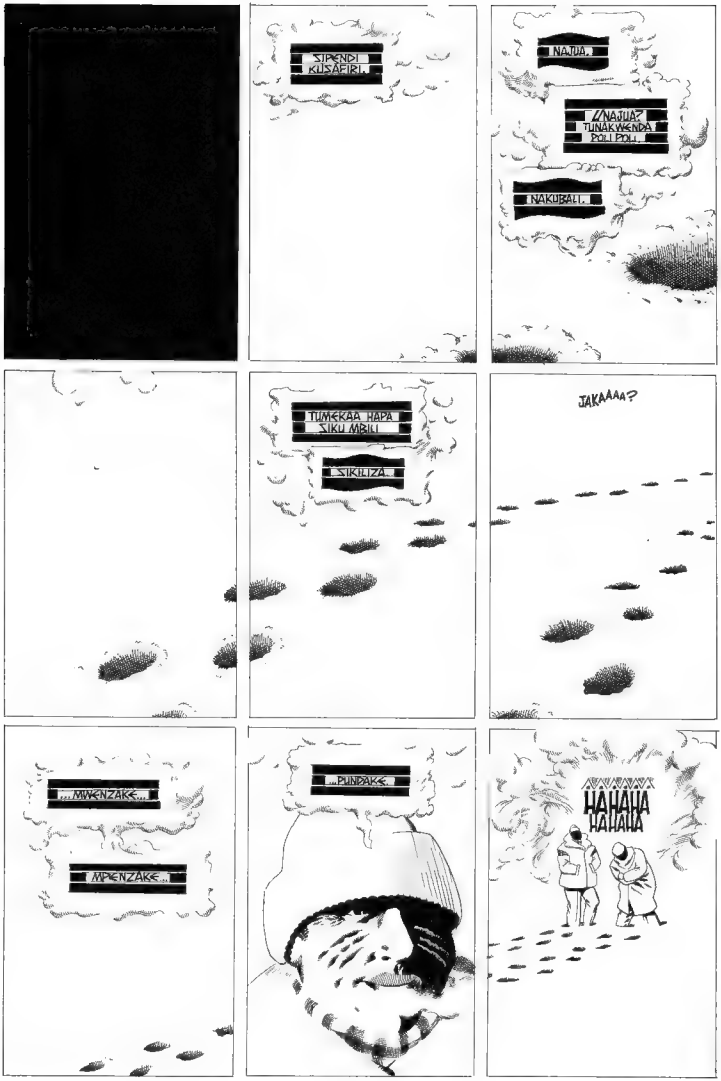

IN OTHER WORDS: "WHY BUY THE MILK WHEN THERE'S A SLUT-COW WILLING TO COME UP AND SQUIRT IT IN YOUR MOUTH FOR FREE?"
UHHHHH
Now that we've CLEARED THE AIR about THAT -- I expect you'll be wanting to BLAST AWAY at a few more SAPLINGS before we head back to CAMP.
OHYESPLEASE MAAMPRETTY PLEASE AND THANK YOUMAAMPLEASE!
NOW?
YES, MEMSAHIB?
BOUNCE
BOUNCE
BOUNCE
Please RELOAD Sahib Cerebus' Gun...
YES, MEMSAHIB?
HOT DIGITY!

You MAY be WONDERING WHY I am INSTRUCTING Charo to return BOTH guns to this BRIEFCASE equipped with PADLOCKS.
UHHHH
The Mothers have CAUTIONED me that TEMPORARY SEVERE DEPRESSION is a possible side effect of Papa's Treatments.
SKETCH SKETCH
I TRUST that I have Made Myself UnderSTOOD.
UHHHH
?
YES, MA'AM
?
ALSO.
I find it ADVISABLE to fire OFF a WARNING SHOT when APPROACHING Camp Under These Circumstances.
In Case ANYone has fallen ASLEEP where he or she Ought NOT To Have.
AGAIN.
I TRUST that I have Made Myself UnderSTOOD.
?
OH!
UHHHH
YES, MA'AM
?
LAMB?

THERE you are
Saint Caradhus did SPLENDIDLY. If saplings were Game, we'd have provisions for the Entire Winter.
and what about YOU, Lamb?
I trust YOU had a Good Time while we... were
YOU HIT HAM ERNESTWAY?!
I DIDN'T HIT... HIM
I SLAPPED HIM

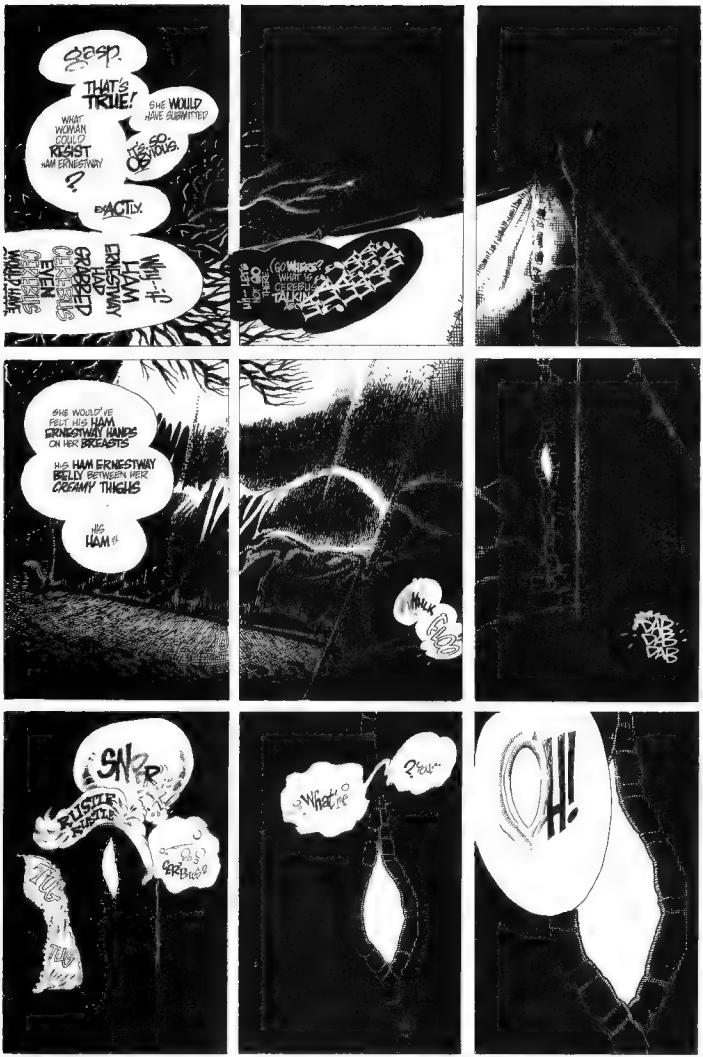
THERE'S A BIG DIFF
YOU "SLAPPED" HAM ERNEST
I TOLD YOU.
HE GRABBED ME.
JAKAAAAAAAA
What.
HAM LET CEREBUS USE HIS UGLIN.
IMPLYING. What. EXACTLY.
IMPLYING:
IMPLYING:
WOULD YOU EVER SLAP CEREBUS?
IF YOU GAVE ME A GOOD REASON TO ?
CERTAINLY.
SHIT.
CEREBUS KNEW THAT WAS THE RIGHT ANSWER TO THAT ONE

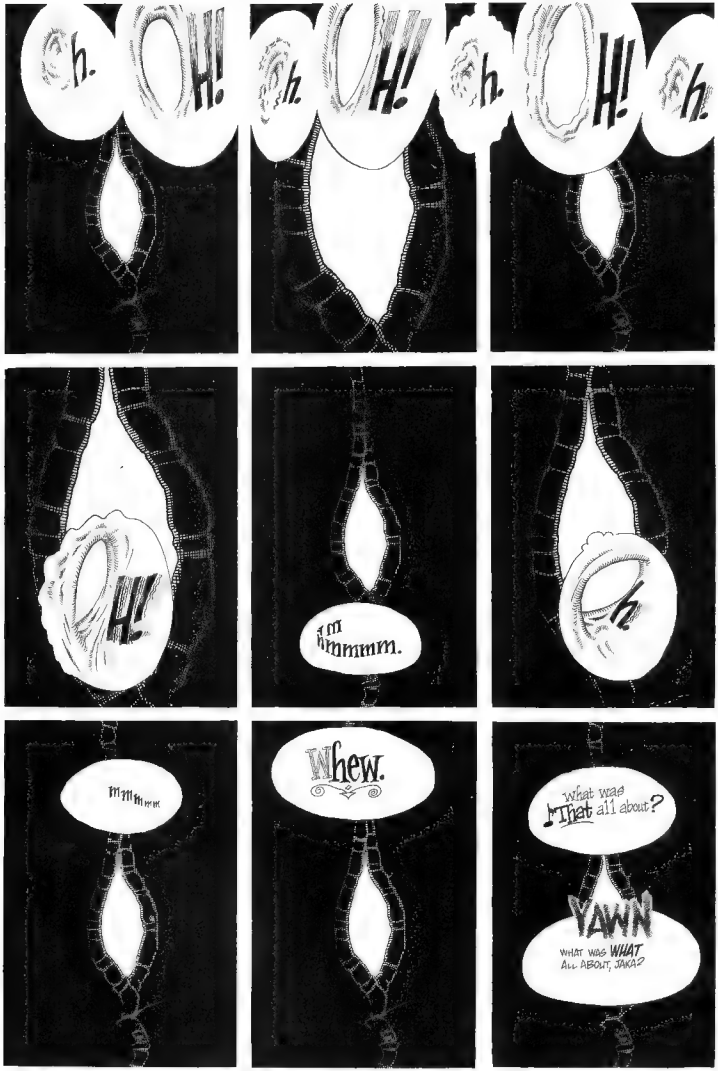

CRAK SNAP
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRAK SNAP POP
CRUNCH
SNAP CRAK
CRUNCH
SNP CRAK
CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH
Stop chewing so fucking loud.
CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH
CRAK SNAP

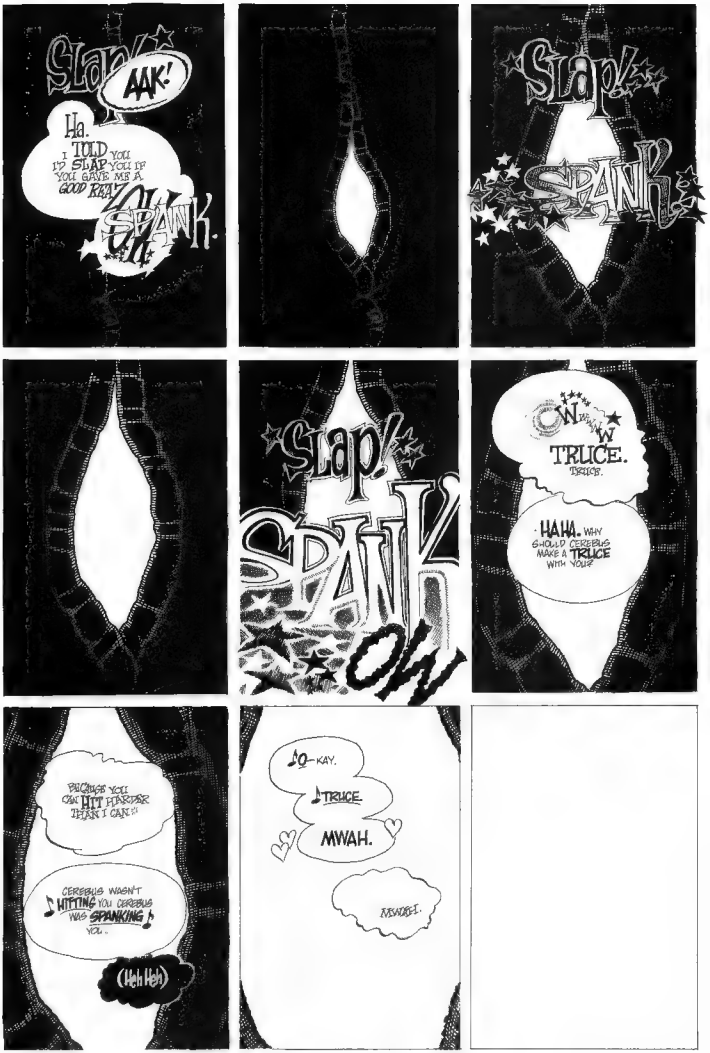

SIPENDI KUSAFIRI..
NAJUA..
NAKUBALI..
TUMEKAA HAPA SIKU MBILI
SIKILIZA..
JAKAAAA?
...MWENZAKE...
MPENZAKE...
...PUNDAKE..
HAHAHA HAHAHA

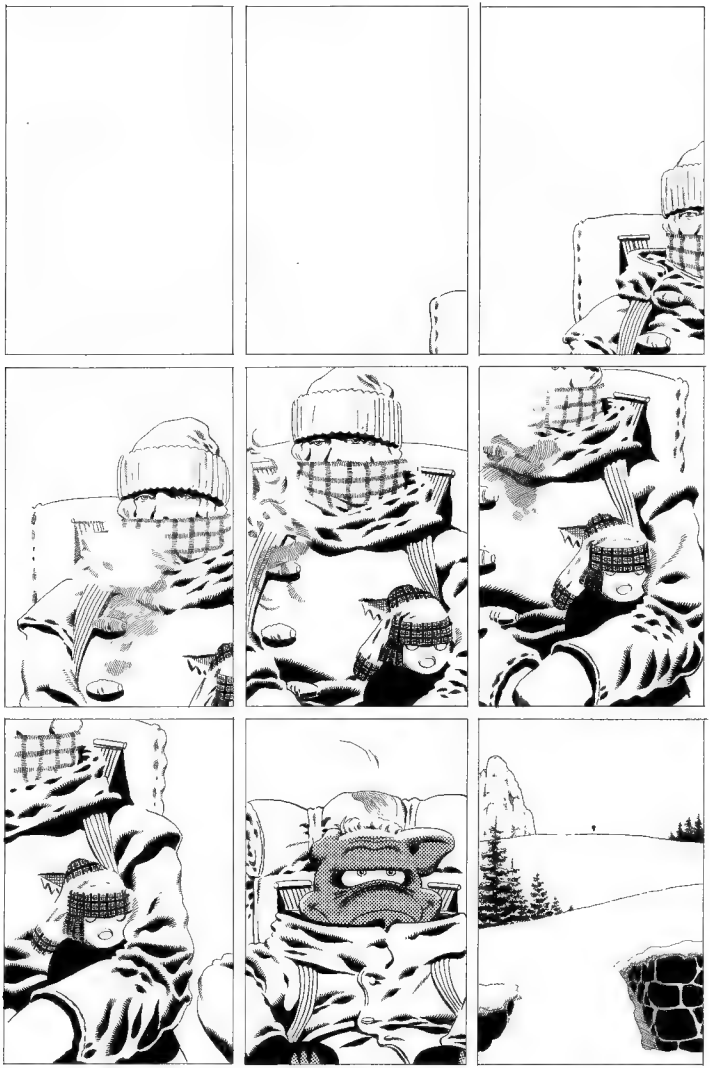
"THIS IS SAKA."
"THE PRINCESS OF JUPITER HAS JOINED ME."
"GORGEOUS GIRLFRIEND"
"WHO HIT HAM ERN."
"YAROOM"
"OH, RIGHT. HOW SORRY I KEEP FORGETTING."
"WHO SLAPPED HAM ERNESTWAY"
WHICH IS WHY (AS YOU'VE NOTICED BY NOW) THEY'RE NOT ACTUALLY SPEAKING
"DAD?"
"FELLAS."
"THIS..."
"...IS THE HAM ERNESTWAY."
"AND THIS?"
HUNH HUNH
KI PUNDAKE
HAHAH AHAHA HA
BLOP

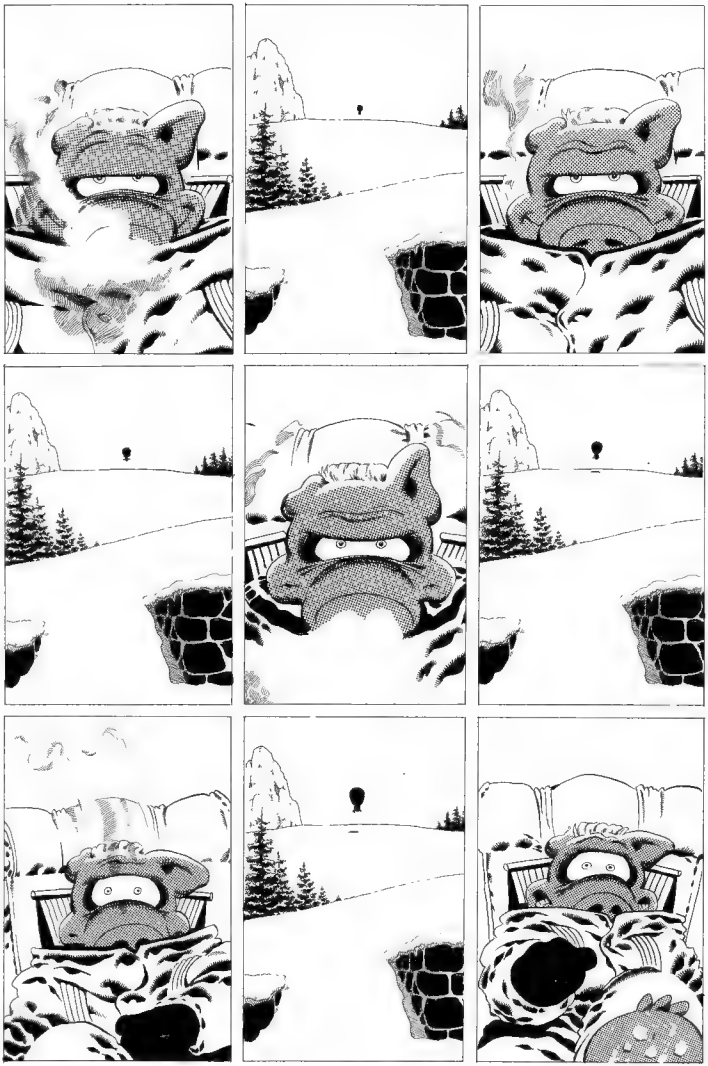
"GRRAAT"
LITTLE MONSTER.
"HAHAHA IT'S TRUE! AND THEN SHE'S ON THE PHONE FOR FORTY SECONDS."
SHE'S GOT A KINK IN HER HAIR.
"WHAT'S THAT?"
"OH, ANE."
"SHE'S A BARREL OF LAUGHS."
"HAH HAH HAH. DID CERBERUS TELL YOU ABOUT THE TIME SHE CALLED OUT A WHOLE DIVISION OF LEAN, PIKE TO HAVE CERBERUS ARRESTED??"
HAM ERNESTWAY
TRIPPED & STUMBLED SOMETHING
AND THEN USED JAKA TO STEADY HIMSELF
"OOOF."
HAM ERNESTWAY DID NOT "GRAB" JAKA
IF HAM ERNESTWAY DID GRAB JAKA JAKA WOULD NOT HAVE HIT HIM.
NAY? NAY.
WHY WOULD JAKA HAVE DONE?
JAKA WOULD HAVE SUBMITTED TO HIM (HAM)
"IF HAM ERNESTWAY DID "GRAB" JAKA?"
YES?
BEHOLD! CERBERUS'S ANSWER TO HIS QUESTION OF IF.
AND NOW CERBERUS IS WONDERING WHAT HAPPENED?


SIGH.
THAT'S TRUE!
WHAT WOMAN COULD RESIST HAM ERNESTWAY?
SHE WOULD HAVE SURRENDERED
IT'S SO OBVIOUS.
EXACTLY.
HAM ERNESTWAY GRABBED HER BREASTS
HAM ERNESTWAY BELLY BETWEEN HER CREAMY THIGHS
HIS HAM!!
SHE WOULD'VE FELT HIS HAM ERNESTWAY HANDS ON HER BREASTS
HIS HAM ERNESTWAY BELLY BETWEEN HER CREAMY THIGHS
HIS HAM!!
HMMM
SNORT
RUSTLE RUSTLE
WHAT?!
?!...
OH!


h.
OH!
h.
OH!
h.
OH!
h.
OH!
hmmmm.
h.
mmmm
Whew.
What was That all about?
YAWN
WHAT WAS WHAT ALL ABOUT, JAKE?


Slap!
AAK!
Ha. I TOLD YOU I'D SLAP YOU IF YOU GAVE ME A GOOD RRAT SPANK.
Slap!
SPANK
Slap!
SPANK
Ow
NOW TRUCE.
TRUCE.
HAHA. WHY SHOULD CERBERUS MAKE A TRUCE WITH YOU?
BECAUSE YOU CAN HIT HARDER THAN I CAN.
CERBERUS WASN'T HITTING YOU CERBERUS WAS SPANKING YOU.
(Heh Heh)
OKAY.
TRUCE.
MWAH.
MWAH.





TO HAM & HAM NOT

From Denis Brian's introduction to his book *The True Gen:*

Why have I tried to free him from his legend, when his authorized biographer—the widow at his side, Princeton at his back, and all documents to hand—had admitted failure; and Hotchner, with recordings of Hemingway's intoxicated and intoxicating monologues, an eyewitness to much of his life from the 1950s on, hadn't made the attempt?

A dummy run in the early 1970s encouraged me. In my book Murderers and Other Friendly People, *I interviewed outstanding interviewers to discover how they persuaded the reluctant to come out of hiding and the tongue-tied to talk. One chapter was about Hemingway's interviewers and intimates.*

The result amused Esquire *publisher Arnold Gingrich, who wrote: "All Denis Brian had to do, seemingly, to be the wittiest fellow around, was just to get everybody who ever interviewed Hemingway to talk about everybody else who had interviewed Hemingway. He really didn't have to say a thing himself, once he had got that great idea, to come off as the most sardonic satirist since Mark Twain...Hemingway's interviewers do seem to show an astonishing resemblance to the proverbial blind Hindus describing an elephant from firsthand acquaintance with the subject."*

Gingrich failed to mention that I had also interviewed him, and that Mary Hemingway had ridiculed his opinion of her husband as uninformed.

22 November 99 - In his column "Monologue to the Maestro: A High Seas Letter" (first printed in *Esquire*, October 1935, and reprinted in *By-Line Ernest Hemingway*, Scribners) Hemingway informs us that there are two absolute necessities in regard to writing. One is seriousness about writing. The other is talent. Several paragraphs later, we are informed that imagination is the one thing besides honesty that a writer must have. I did not think often of the Monty Python Spanish Inquisition sketch in the course of my Hemingway research, but on this occasion I did.

Page 427 - I first thought that I would write out all of the translations of the conversations between Ngui and Charo as an oversized appendix to "Form & Void." I thought to do this to torture my long-suffering audience who, already having to defend me against charges of being a foolish, evil misogynist—both to others and, I suspect, to themselves—would as a result have to languish on tenterhooks of suspicion that the translations might prove me to also as well be a foolish, evil racist. Since the sort of knee-jerk liberalism (or "political correctness," as it has mutated its own terminology) which wrings its hands over such possibilities is inherently funny to me, this seemed a very funny thing to do. After I'd completed this first installment, it seemed less funny, if only because $2.25 seems like an exorbitant amount of money for an ever-diminishing crowd of people to shell out for twenty pages of story and five pages of typing as if I had had a few too many margaritas at the Floridita the night before. To publish four of the pages of the story in a language, Swahili, with which I am sure most of my audience is unfamiliar, seemed needlessly abusive. All of the dialogue is taken from the "lonely planet" Swahili phrase book which the severely critical reader is warned is in "survival Swahili," which is to say a "pidgin version of a pidgin language" which is a variation of Bantu with many contributions from English, French, German, and other mother and father tongues that made said contributions before, during, and after the heyday of the slave trade, whose loss to European culture is nothing that anyone can mourn or desire to see a return to, myself included, and if stating that unequivocally can assure *any* of my readers that I am *not* a foolish, evil racist, then I can for myself count that a good thing even as I remind myself that in the year 2000 "racism" is neck and neck with "feminism" as "Most Ill-Defined Term" and that 90% of all human exertion seems to be expended on making sure that *others* are *not* racist and *are* feminist and that the purity demanded by those who have entrusted themselves with deciding who is "in" and who is "out" in either assessment is an exacting one. For those so self-entrusted, I can only say, "Watch closely," knowing that such advice is unnecessary, for the self-entrusted arbiters of "racism" and "feminism" seem to do nothing else, becoming in the process experts on individual trees while seeming to know little or nothing about forests.

Despite having only a modest aptitude for learning languages, I had resolved to really attempt to learn Swahili for the sake of these conversations. I maintained that resolution until I reached the part in my Swahili phrase book about "Nouns" and the way that the "class of Noun" determines the prefix of the verb in a given sentence. "Put simply," (haha) "you have one set of rules for how the classes act on nouns, and associated but dissimilar sets of rules for how they act on verbs, pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs. Swahili learners often receive(d) a big chart that lays out all the transformations on a grid, but it takes months to understand the chart and years to use it effectively."

So, "survival Swahili" it is:

Ngui: Where are we going?
Charo: North.
Ngui: We're going...?

Charo: North. [*Sand. Hills. Creek.*]
Ngui: Say again?
Charo: Hahaha. [*Sand?*] Sand. [*Hills?*] Hill. [*Creek?*] Creek.
Ngui: Ah! Sand Hill Creek! Wonderful! Let's go.
Charo: Hahahaa.
Ngui: How far?
Charo: Mmmm.
Ngui: How many kilometers is it from here?
Charo: Sixty? Seventy, maybe?
Ngui: Really?
Charo: Really.
(pause)
Ngui: Can I stay here? I've changed my mind.
Charo: Hahahaha.

The word "Poa" on the shoulders of Ngui's jacket, my Swahili phrase book assures me, is Swahili for "cool" (in the "hip" sense of the term). Interesting that, phonetically, the word resembles both "poor" and "power."

Page 431 - One of Papa Hemingway's great affectations was to ask just about every woman that he met if he might call her "daughter." In all of the Hemingway biographies that I read, the only one who demurred was, reportedly, the actress Ingrid Bergman, voicing the same objection that I have Jaka using here—that she didn't think of Hemingway "that way." It seems to me that this trait alone should have some sort of psychiatric designation. "Zeus complex"? One of the reasons that I admire Lillian Ross's *New Yorker* profile is that it answered for me a number of questions as to how Hemingway "got away" with these kinds of behaviour affectations. The answer would seem to be that he lived in a fantasy world of his own creation and most of his interaction with the citizens of *this* world was in the form of non-sequiturs which allowed him to maintain his own perception of reality while ignoring the one going on around him. Ross documents this exchange with Marlene Dietrich, whom Papa called "the Kraut" as well as "daughter." Dietrich is talking about baby-sitting her grandchildren when her daughter and son-in-law go out:

DIETRICH: Papa, you should see me when they go out. I'm the baby-sitter. As soon as they leave the house, I go around and look in all the corners and straighten the drawers and clean up. I can't stand a house that isn't neat and clean. I go around in all the corners with the towels I bring with me from the Plaza (Hotel) and I clean up the whole house. Then they come in at one or two in the morning, and I take the dirty towels and some of the baby's things that need washing and, with my bundle over my shoulder, I go out and get a taxi, and the driver, he thinks I am this old washerwoman from Third Avenue, and he takes me in the taxi and talks to me with sympathy so I am afraid to let him take me to the Plaza. I get out a block away from the Plaza and I walk home with my bundle and I wash the baby's things, and then I go to sleep.
HEMINGWAY: Daughter, you're hitting them with the bases loaded.

Never underestimate the value of a non-sequitur in answering an unanswerable anecdote. No wonder the man had so many "daughters."

Pages 433-435 - Mary's sanctioning or "sanctioning" of Hemingway's affairs or "affairs" was considered to be an off-limits subject while the Widow Queen was still alive. Carlos Baker's Widow-Queen-sanctioned biography is well-nigh to mute on the subject, which makes the treatment of Adriana Ivancich and Debba (Papa's African native fiancée or "fiancée") in the book, just two notable examples, so contorted as to represent a new branch of literature: Widow-Queen-Sanctioned Biography There was, reportedly, an incident at Finca Vigia where Hemingway *did* hurl a full glass of wine in Mary's face and, according to Denis Brian in his book *The True Gen* (roughly translated, The Whole Truth, an old RAF term which was a favourite of Papa's, although he seemed to have a very casual acquaintanceship with it), threw Mary's typewriter to the floor in a fit of pique triggered by Adriana's arrival at Finca Vigia and by Mary's accusation that he was "mooning over Adriana like a pimply teenager." There are a couple of really good pictures of Papa doing exactly that, so bullseye for Mary. Adriana was a teen-to-early-twenties "daughter" upon whom Papa showered many gifts, including wads of cash, and whom he entertained at Finca Vigia, again, according to *The True Gen* and a person identified only as A Friend (with friends like this…):

…He sent Mary away from the house for several months and made her stay in a hotel in Havana. He said, "You must stay there. I demand my privacy. I am going to have house guests here. That's how it's going to be. Get used to it." She absolutely took it. She wanted so badly to keep on being his wife, to have the status of being the wife of a great writer, that she'd do anything.

One of the more interesting stories in *How It Was*, Mary's book, was of Adriana's mother asking Mary if she and Ernest had been married in a church. Bullseye for Mama Ivancich. Back at *The True Gen*, Nancy Dyer chimes in with:

In Cuba, Adriana fell in love with Juan Verona, not Papa. She complained to me that Papa pursued her all the time and she couldn't stand it. She had great affection for him, but didn't love him. I had this from my friend Juan who was very interested in Adriana at the time and knew what was in her head probably more than anyone.

"Buck" Lanham and Hemingway's sister then discuss whether Papa could have "gotten it up" with Adriana, Nancy Dryer mentions that Papa was considered "an ogre by mothers of daughters in Cuba," and then it's A Friend's turn again:

...Mary is her own best publicity agent and in her book she's talking about situations nobody else but Ernest is party to, where she can say, "He was magnanimous. He not only forgave me, he begged me to hang on." And [in *How It Was*] *she was telling him, "You're so abominable I can't stand you any more." And he'd say, "Stand me just a little longer. You know I have these difficult days. I'm a writer, after all. You must understand." And it's not true that when he was sober he never asked her to leave. Because this thing that happened in Havana he didn't say when he was drunk.*
DENIS BRIAN: Yet she claimed to have loved him.
A FRIEND: Maybe in the beginning, but not when he put her up at that hotel and moved that babe from Italy in.

Bullseye for A Friend. (You know, I get this creepy feeling that A Friend was actually Mary setting the record straight or "straight" or...nah, couldn't be. Could it?)

Hemingway fictionalized Adriana as Renata in *Across the River and Into the Trees* (which one reviewer aptly rechristened: *Across the Street and Into the Grill*). Back at the Widow-Queen-Sanctioned Carlos Biography, Debba, a native girl of the Wakamba tribe, is dispensed with in a few spliced and mangled paragraphs on a single page (misattributed in the index). She plays an altogether more prominent role in the last of Papa's posthumous works, *True at First Light*, which was released to correspond with the Hemingway centenary in 1999. Parts of the manuscript had previously been Widow-Queen-Sanctioned for serialization in two issues of (you'll think I'm kidding, but I'm not) *Sports Illustrated*, that noted purveyor of Nobel-laureate-authored literature. I'm willing to bet that neither installment mentioned Debba.

Mary was in severe denial about the 40,000 words Papa wrote about their 1953-54 safari, characterizing it in *How It Was* as "fiction based on fact, more fun than my facts," seeing fiction (I would guess) in all of the sections where Hemingway went a-courting to Debba's shamba every time Mary left on a shopping expedition to a neighbouring city. In a letter written from Magadi, Kenya, January 3, 1954, to Harvey Breit, Papa wrote about N'gui (the real N'gui, Hemingway's gun-bearer—not my completely fictional Ngui):

He and I are in love with 2 girls here in the Wakamba Shamba...our girls are heiresses, sort of like Brenda Frazier in the old days, only black and very beautiful. Every day they bring us presents; sweet corn and beer they make (very good) and today I gave them a pound of lard and the haunch of a warthog Miss Mary shot. Also some salt and a copy of Life. *Yesterday I met my girl's mother and her brother and two sisters...Miss Mary just stays the hell away from it and is understanding and wonderful. I got to know my fiancée while she [Mary] was away....Have my head shaved because this is the way my fiancée likes it. She likes to feel all the holes in my head and the wealts* [sic]. *It is sort of fun too. I never knew about it before. I thought they were a kind of disgrace. But not here. Harvey, African girls, Kamba and Masai anyway, are really wonderful and all that nonsense about that they can't love you is not true. It is just that they are more cheerful than girls at home. My girl is completely impudent, her face is impudent in repose, but absolutely loving and delicate rough. I better quit writing about it because I want to write it really and I mustn't spoil it. Anyway it gives me too bad a hardon* [sic].

N'gui is about 30 he thinks and he has five wives and with the money from this trip he will get maybe 2 more. Maybe only one, the sister of my girl. Maybe he will marry my girl because he and I are brothers so it is OK. But my girl wants to go to N.Y. where she will see me kill all those animals in that prehistoric animal number of Life. *She thinks they have all those brontosauruses and Pterodactyls where I live along with the Mammoth, the Sabre-toothed tigers and Irish Elk and the Giant Sloth because she saw the pictures.*

At night I tell them how we killed George Armstrong Custer and the 7th Calvary and they think we are wasting our time here and should get the hell to America.

I am not sure if words fail me or if I fail words, but I find myself unable to think of anything suitable to add to that. Was Mary aware of Debba? Oh, yes. From Mary's typescript of her East African Journal, December 1st, 1953 (John F. Kennedy Library):

Last night at dinner, Papa mentioned that I was depriving him of his new wife [sic]. *This morning when I suggested we could arrange everything, Muindi giving her a bath, me moving into Mouse's* [Hemingway's second oldest son Patrick, who had joined them on safari] *tent for the night, Papa evaded, said "not the time to talk about it" as I well knew.*

Mary, on at least one other occasion, indulged in this "taboo one-upmanship." According to Gregory Hemingway's *Papa* she threatened to sleep with *him* (son number three) one drunken night on Pilar, Hemingway's beloved fishing boat. Hemingway said go ahead, so she did. *Sleep* with him, that is, side by side. Poor Gregory, by his own admission, didn't sleep much at *all* that night.

Mary, like most women, was no strategist but quite a tactician, relying to a great extent on "reverse psychology" in pushing Papa in the direction of any woman who caught his attention. If the ensuing spectacle of her aplomb in the face of Papa's intention to enter into a bigamous marriage with a woman characterized by Denis Zaphiro as (please don't kill the messenger, folks) an "evil-smelling piece of camp trash" seems—well, let's just say "odd"—it does not seem to me to be either "unique" or unique. On the contrary, it seems endemic to the "Woman Behind the Great Man" (in this case, "Women Behind the Great Man" #4, collect them all!) role, "role," or Role. Is she expressing her own autonomy, adulthood, and independence by "looking the other way" while "holding her head high," or is it just a metaphorical and spiritual "neck sprain"? Or even worse, is she accepting any level of humiliation whatsoever just to—as A Friend points out—keep that ring on her finger and her name on the joint account? Feminism and the matriarchy seem to favour the former interpretation, but it seems to me that it is more often, more realistically, and more unhappily the latter.

And it's made me forget to stick to my Hemingway "Hollywood Indian" voice. Damn:

Worst thing for "holding head high" and "looking other way" is when Great Man grounds out to short as Papa did with Adriana. Great Man must take it out on someone. Miss Mary elected.

Hemingway really did talk like that, according to Lillian Ross and his son Gregory. Again, please don't kill the messenger.

Okay, that's enough "dishing the dirt" for this installment.

Page 438 - "Beat to the wide" was a phrase that Hemingway picked up from Duff Twysden in the mid-'20s while the Great Man was grounding out to short with *her*, a failure which he immortalized in *The Sun Also Rises*.

Page 439 - Feel free to kill the messenger:

Charo: What do you think of Memsahib Mary?
(For those who find gender interchangeability a mighty cause for celebration, even a cursory study of Swahili should have you running for the party hats and the confetti: there is almost no distinction between male and female in the language: "Sahib" and "Memsahib" being translated, roughly, as "Mr." and "Mrs." Of course, the "Mem" is a "loan word" from the French, "même", meaning "the same." So Sahib and Memsahib more accurately translate as "Mister" and "Same as Mister." Don't you just *looove* it? Oooh! I *knew* you *would*, darling).
Ngui: Mm. A lion and her cubs. Cubs, Ham, Jaka, and…and…
Ngui: Gray donkey-face…the small person…what is…?
Charo: Zeberus.
Ngui: *Zeberus*! Thank you. Yes. A lion and her cubs. A lesbian lion.
Charo: LESBIAN? I. DON'T. THINK. SO.
Ngui: No?
Charo: No! Memsahib Mary a homosexual? PLEASE!
Ngui: Not yet?
Charo: NEVER!

Page 446 - Jaka refers to Hemingway's "comb-over," which he was known to belittle in others when he was still in his thirties and forties and which became less of a joke in his fifties. In fact it was a centrepiece of one of his least exemplary moments with Colonel Charles Trueman (Buck) Lanham—later (at the time of the story in question) *General* "Buck" Lanham, whom Hemingway had met during the war when Lanham was commanding the 22nd Regiment. At one of Hemingway's last birthday parties, Lanham accidentally bumped Papa's head with his elbow and was the recipient of a severe tongue-lashing as a result. Later Hemingway had to come crawling ("tearfully" by some reports) and admit that he had blown up because he was concerned that Lanham's elbow had disarranged his carefully combed-over hair. Sad.

Page 447 - The last page that I finished as 1999 was about to become 2000. Picturing birdsong in my head, I ended up spending most of the day with "Blackbird" from the Beatles' *White Album* stuck in my head. Which in turn led to my having "Piggies" (the song which follows it) running through my head as well, with several attendant questions as to what George Harrison was thinking about, writing such a song at the same time that he was (at least theoretically) exploring East Indian spirituality. The next day the Quiet Beatle was in the headlines with his stab wound. Having noted some time ago that John Lennon was shot 17 years and 16 days after JFK, I noted that the assault on George Harrison took place 19 years and 21 days after the Lennon shooting. I would take it as a good sign that we are, at least, counting forward and not backward and that this attack was not fatal.

Sorry, corrupt residue from my former existence as an amateur "observer of times." God's will be done.

Page 449 - I am indebted to Mr. Steve Kane of Braintree, Massachussetts, a long-time Cerebus fan who wrote to me during the course of "Fall and the River" and who (evidently inspired by my extensive, blathering notes about F. Scott Fitzgerald) surprised me with a massive package of photocopies and a 20-page letter about one of his *own* obsessions: pirates. This was no small thing, arriving when it did, since I was apprehensive that "Chasing Scott" was boring everyone senseless and that, at the very least, it required an extensive "minutiaectomy." Having absolutely no interest in pirates to that point, I spent a wonderful couple of days devouring every morsel of Mr. Kane's package, his own enthusiasm and distillation of key points more than making up for the

voice in my head that was going, "Pirates? You mean, like, 'yo-ho-ho-and-a-bottle-of-rum' pirates?" So I wrote him back a long, enthusiastic letter asking a few questions about points he had raised that I hadn't understood, and, lo, back comes another fifteen-page letter and two hardcover books. Anyway, one of the hardcover books was *A Worldwide Illustrated History of Pirates* (David Cordingly, consulting editor, JG Press Inc., 1998, North Dighton, MA), which happened to contain a 17th-century "shootin' ur'n" which I glommed onto right away—knowing that guns would be making their debut in Cerebus' world in "Form & Void." Here it is, and thank you, again, Steve.

Page 450 - Great anecdote from Lillian Ross's *New Yorker* profile of Hemingway. The actual boxers in question are Jack Briton and Benny Leonard. This was followed by:

The anecdote, he told me, had been in the original version of his short story "Fifty Grand," but Scott Fitzgerald had persuaded him to take it out. "Scott thought everybody knew about it, when only Jack Briton and I knew about it, because Jack told it to me," he said. "So Scott told me to take it out. I didn't want to, but Scott was a successful writer and a writer I respected, so I listened to him and took it out."

One of those times when I wished I had a little more "breathing room" for "Form & Void," since this would have made a nice F. Stop Kennedy tie-in. I couldn't picture Cerebus—star-struck as I am depicting him here—missing a chance to throw in a "*Jaka and Cerebus* just got off a *barge* with F. Stop Kennedy!" which would take at least a page or two to close off. Since Fitzgerald's indisputable role as one of Hemingway's mentors is often disputed in the Hemingway camp (Fitzgerald also persuaded him to amputate the original opening chapter of *The Sun Also Rises*), I wonder that the Ross piece isn't introduced as contradictory evidence from time to time.

From there Hemingway goes on to explain that it is harder to have heroes as you get older and then talks about his cat, Boise, who wants to be a human being (presumably idolizing Hemingway who, to one degree or another, *was* one).

Yes, well.

Pages 453-454 - Mary's pose here is taken from a shot of her used in the photo section of *How It Was*. I laughed when closer examination revealed the earrings. How *does* one coordinate jewelry and firearms?

Page 454 - Personal experience with the "let's all be adults about this" approach to adultery: women tend to be better at faking "doesn't bother *me*" than are men, but in the female case, while the seams tend to rupture less frequently, and more briefly, they do tend to rupture more *explosively*, as I've shown in the first panel. I remember Deni greeting a girl she thought I was sleeping with (I wasn't, but sure wanted to) at the front door of the apartment with: "*Traipse* right in", instead of "Come *on* in."

Page 455 - Only medical science could get away with prescribing electroshock therapy as a cure for depression while cautioning that it can lead to temporary severe depression. All of Papa's firearms were locked up in the gun cabinet at their house in Ketcham, Idaho when he was released from the clinic.

Page 457 - What husband or boyfriend hasn't had experience with this? What husband or boyfriend hasn't developed and maintained a mental rolodex of "trump cards" as depicted here? You haven't?

Chump.

Seriously, it seems to me to be a profoundly degraded masculine existence when your mental faculties erode to the point where all you do is imitate *her* compulsion to invert every life experience, as if men and women are interchangeable ("Oh, yeah? Well how would *YOU* like it if *I*..."). Interchangeability is, to me, the profound female corruption of civilized existence, so using it as an underpinning to your philosophy means, as a man, you have capitulated to the opposing view. I know, I know. You don't agree, so tell you what: here's some artillery (mm. Make that "artillery"): use the preamble "It won't kill you to (fill in the blank)" more often. You know, the one *she* uses to get *you* to attend really stupid family events, shopping, really tedious get-togethers with other couples who bore you to tears, excessive and compulsive housecleaning, anything *except* the really good game that's on television, anything *except* what you *want* to do? Use it on her for things like blowjobs and...uh...well, I can't think of anything else, can you? So, yes, use it on them to get more blowjobs. It won't work, which is why I call it "artillery" instead of artillery.

Chump.

Page 459 - More with our old buddies Ngui and Charo.

Ngui: I hate travelling.
Charo: I know.
Ngui: *Do* you know? We're travelling too slowly.
Charo: I agree.
(pause)
Ngui: We've been here two days already.
Charo: Listen.
Cerebus (off-panel): Jakaaaa?
Ngui: Her companion.
Ngui: Her lover.
Ngui: Her donkey.
Charo: Hahahaha. Hunh. Hunh.
Ngui: Her *little* donkey.
Charo: Hahahahahaha.